

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 INR-10 LAB-04
NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 L-03 NSC-05
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FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7862
INFO AMCONSUL CALGARY
AMCONSUL HALIFAX
AMCONSUL MONTREAL
AMCONSUL QUEBEC
AMCONSUL TORONTO
AMCONSUL VANCOUVER
AMCONSUL WINNIPEG

UNCLAS OTTAWA 03197

PASS DEPT OF LABOR, ILAB.

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, CA
SUBJECT: QUEBEC-ONTARIO DISPUTE OVER CONSTRUCTION WORKERS

1. QUEBEC-ONTARIO POLEMIC OVER HIRING ONLY ONE'S OWN
RESIDENTS IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY IS BECOMING BITTER.
QUEBEC ASSEMBLY RECENTLY PASSED PROVINCIAL LAW REGULATING,
AMONG OTHER THINGS, THE HIRING PRACTICES IN THE CONSTRUCT-
ION INDUSTRY. UNDER THE NEW LAW, ALL QUEBEC CONSTRUCTION
WORKERS MUST REGISTER WITH A NEW PROVINCIAL AGENCY AS A
PREREQUISITE FOR WORK. ALSO UNDER THE NEW QUEBEC LAW,
ONTARIO CONSTRUCTION WORKERS NOT ALREADY WORKING IN QUEBEC
CANNOT REGISTER AND CONSEQUENTLY WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO
WORK IN QUEBEC AFTER JULY 1, 1978. ONTARIO PREMIER
WILLIAM DAVIS HAS ATTEMPTED TO WORK OUT A SOLUTION WITH
PREMIER RENE LEVESQUE, BUT TO DATE THE NEW RULE HAS NOT
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BEEN MODIFIED. ONTARIO PLANS TO RETALIATE WITH SIMILAR
LEGISLATION BANNING QUEBEC CONSTRUCTION WORKERS UNLESS
THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT CAN PRESENT A CASE TO THE SUPREME
COURT AND WIN A RULING DECLARING THE QUEBEC REGULATION
UNCONSTITUTIONAL. MEDIA REPORTS PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU
IS SEEKING LEGAL ADVICE BEFORE SUBMITTING CONSTITUTIONALITY
QUESTION TO THE COURT.

2. PRESS REPORTS OVER 1,000 ONTARIO AND OVER 2,000 QUEBEC WORKERS WILL BE AFFECTED. NO MENTION IS MADE OF OTHER PROVINCIAL WORKERS. CANADIAN BUILDING TRADE UNIONS' REPRESENTATIVE IN OTTAWA SAYS THAT PRESS REPORTS ARE ACCURATE AND THAT IT IS UNLIKELY SUPREME COURT CAN ACT IN TIME TO AVERT DISLOCATION OF ONTARIO WORKERS WHEN THEY COMPLETE JOBS IN QUEBEC AND WILL EFFECTIVELY BLOCK OTHER NON-RESIDENT TRADESMEN FROM WORKING IN QUEBEC IN THE FUTURE. REPORTS INDICATE THAT THE INTENT OF THE QUEBEC LEGISLATION IS TO ELIMINATE CORRUPTION AND KICKBACKS IN THE PROVINCIAL CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY AND NOT TO BAR NON-RESIDENTS FROM JOBS. NEVERTHELESS, MANY NON-RESIDENTS, ESPECIALLY ALONG THE ONTARIO-QUEBEC BORDER, WILL BE AFFECTED.

3. COMMENT: IF NOT CHECKED OR AT LEAST DELAYED, THIS ISSUE COULD BLOSSOM INTO BITTER DISPUTE BETWEEN QUEBEC AND ONTARIO. ONE COMMENTATOR SAID THAT IT ALMOST APPEARS AS IF THE PROVINCES WERE ACTING AS THOUGH THEY WERE SEPARATE COUNTRIES. ENDERS

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